REPORT

MAJOR C. DONALDSON'S

REPORT

ON EMIGRATION.

1874.

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TO THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EMIGRATION AID SOCIETY OF THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN AND DISTRICT OF NIAGARA, IN CONNECTION WITH HAMILTON AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO.

GENTLEMEN,—

On my return from Europe on Emmigration duty, it is necessary for me to render to you a detailed account of my labours and expenses connected therewith as your Commissioner.

After my appointment in July last it was necesary for me to obtain all needful information in order to prepare myself thoroughly for this most important duty.

I first applied to our Ontario Government and received all the information in their possession relative to my undertaking.

On Monday, the 8th day of September last, I left Niagara by boat for Europe, calling at Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec on our Governments' Hon. Commissioners, and received letters of introduction, maps, pamphlets and all directions necessary for my missionary tour on emigration in Europe.

On the 13th day of September I took my passage on board the Steamer "Prussian" for Ireland and Liverpool, and sailed at 11 a.m., and arrived after a pleasant passage on the ninth day at 6 a.m., at the green banks of sweet old Ireland, all on board rejoicing at the beautiful sight. We delivered mails and passengers, and proceeded down the beautiful coasts of Ireland and Scotland to Liverpool, where we arrived on the tenth day at 6 a.m. with great rejoicing. We all breakfasted on board at 8 a.m., and at 11.40 a.m. I took train for London (200 miles,) and passed through the most delightful country I ever saw. It may well be called a Paradise. I arrived at magnificent old London at 5.30 p.m. on the 23rd of September, making the whole passage in less than ten days (2,618 miles).

On the 24th September I called on the Dominion Commissioner at his office in London, 11 Adam St., Adelphi, and delivered letters of introduction and directions from our Government's Commissioners of Emigration, the Hon. Mr. Pope, and A. McKellar.

I immediately called upon Mr. Williams, at the Boys' Refuge, in London, to secure fifty or one hundred boys for the farmers in Canada, but failed on account of the high rate of passage (£4 15s. sterling). He said he would let me have what boys I required and could get good situations for at the same reduced rates of passage as farmers and their sons and daughters (£2 5s.), and would wait until Spring, when no doubt the passage rate will be reduced.

I was then immediately put in communication with the Labourers's Union in Berkshire and Cambridge by a Government agent who was just returning to Canada; and in the course of six days I had the promise of seventeen farm families all ready to place themselves under my direction, and be shipped for St. Catharines, Ontario, where houses and labour were awaiting them amongst the members of our Emigration Aid Society.

I was delayed by the Lonodon office from the 1st of October until the 15th in getting the warrants in the hands of Mr. Memory, (the Secretary of the Labourer's Union at Newbury) to ship the families referred to. On that morning the Labourers and ourselves all took train for Liverpool (250 miles) and arrived on board the steamer Sarma-

tian for Canada, the same evening. The next day I gave George Paty, who seemed to be the most intelligent of the Emigrants, a list of the members of our Emigration Aid Society in St. Catharines, who had applied to me for them all and I cautioned Paty to be careful and take care of the list for fear he might go astray. I also sent a copy of this list to our Secretary-Treasurer two weeks before they were shipped.

During my delay in and about London I became acquainted with several gentlemen of large estates and means, who are strongly impressed with the notion of forming colonies in Canada, and sending out a large number of tenant farmers and labourers, and settling them on our Free Grant Lands.

I never can forget the kind reception as a Canadian I received in London.

I then left London for Glasgow, Perth, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, continually lecturing, distributing maps pamphlets and my cards, to the number of four-thousand upon the great advantages and inducements which are offered by the Governments of Canada to actual settlers.

During my sojourn in Scotland, I became acquainted with several gentlemen of large means who are strongly impressed with the advantages of forming large Scotch Colonies in the United States; and one gentleman has taken up a large tract of land in Kansas, and has induced a great number to settle there. But there was great objection to this place on account of the severity of the climate in summer, and often in winter, the bad brackish water, and sometimes none at all, in the long summer droughts of three months, which caused a great deal of sickness and sun-stroke, especially when the thermometer rose to 100 ° and sometimes 120 °.

I at length was made acquainted with the Secretary of the Chambers of Agriculture of Scotland, whom I found the most thorough Agriculturalist and business-man I had met in all my travels in Europe, and in full confidence with the whole farming community of Scotland, and part of England. He had a large sum of money placed in his hands to invest in lands in Kansas, if he approved of the locality as a place for settlement; but, being a practical man, he was not easily deceived, and he has abandoned Kansas for the present, and he accepted maps, pamphlets and all information about Canada from me. I spent a portion of several days with him discussing the great subject of colonisation in Canada; and as soon as he has consulted with his Board of Association upon the advisability of making Canada a field for settling Scotch Colonies, they will proceed to examine our fine country, and if they decide in our favour, we may expect a large capital laid out in improved farms, or reclaiming and settling our fine forests and prairie lands in Ontario, Manitoba the far West, and other parts of Canada.

I then returned to Glasgow and arranged to ship forty or fifty ship carpenters for St. Catharines and Port Dalhousie shipyards, and then left Glasgow on the 22nd October for Belfast, Ireland, and remained there three days, where I met with the same usual kindness, and was glad to hear from Canadian friends. I became acquainted with the Member for Belfast, our Dominion Agent, Mr. Foy, and the Dominion Agent of the line of steamboats to Quebec, Mr. Gowan. These gentlemen were very kind and gave me a deal of information concerning Emigration in Ireland. I found the city of Belfast a beautiful, neat, and thriving place of business, and the people, with whom I came in contact, very kind and intelligent.

I telegraphed to Mr. Johnson of Cantuck, with whom I had some correspondence concerning a large number of labourers for our public works on the

Welland Canal, and he replied that he could not meet me at that time. My time was now becoming short as I intended to sail for home on the 4th of December.

On account of the change in our Government, and the money crisis in the United States, causing thousands to be thrown out of employment, and vast numbers returning home to Europe every week, I made up my mind that Canada would soon have a full supply of American Emigrants and Labourers. I also observed that Joseph Arch had returned to England, and as I wished to meet him, I returned to Liverpool in search of him. Thence I proceeded to Leamington where I found him, and spent a half day with him. I found him pretty well posted concerning the Emigration to Canada, and the settling of the Free Grant Lands. We only disagreed on one point, building cottages and clearing three or four acres of land by the Government, and leaving a debt of, say, forty pounds for the Emigrant to pay off in five or six years. I proposed that the Government should furnish one year's provision, and seed for each family that might require it, instead of a cottage, and that the Emigrants build their own cottages, which they can do at less than one-half it would cost the Government to do it for them. With one year's provisions and seed they can overcome difficulties, and raise their own provisions afterwards, and remain nearly free from debt. A large number of families going in together to settle, will assist each other to build their own cottages, and they will find it very agreeable and pleasant to meet together, and assist each other. It used to be our happiest time, when we were all poor, and were always ready to assist a new settler to build his cottage and share with him our small means.

Joseph Arch is undoubtedly a most able, self-taught man, and understands well what work of all kinds is, except the axe which is soon learnt. I would strongly advise all Emigrants intending to settle on Free Grant Lands to go to service with practical farmers and learn all kinds of Canadian farm work, especially the use of the axe and edge tools for six months, which they will find a great advantage in making a beginning on new land.

It will be advisable for the settlers to employ a few good practical axe-men to go in with them, who understand erecting cottages, making rails, and building fences, and clearing land, and roughing in the bush, and they will soon learn the whole art of Canadian farming.

I attended his great meeting at Leamington on the 1st of December at 7 p.m. Not less than six thousand farmers and labourers with their wives, sons, and daughters, were present, and all most anxious to hear the joyful news from their President (who is, as it were, a king among them) about Canada, which was delivered most correctly and conscientiously; and no doubt it will astonish England and Canada to see the great rush and tide of Emigration to Canada next spring.

I left Leamington on the 2nd December for Liverpool, and made preparations for sailing to Canada, by way of Portland, on board the steamer Nestorian. We left on the 4th of December at 10 a.m., and arrived on the morning of the 16th December, at 6 a.m., at Portland. It was a beautiful clear sky, and it was indeed a cheerful thing again to see the sun, which for twelve days I had not seen. I then proceeded homewards, calling at Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, and arrived at home on Saturday morning the 20th December.

I must say that notwithstanding all that has been done to enlighten the people of Great Britain and Ireland about us, the old world knows very little indeed about us, and they are perfectly ignorant about Canada. On almost all occasions in conversation with men, on the subject of Canada, often some one would say, "Oh, yes, I have

a brother or a neighbour or afriend in America." And in reply to my question, "Whereabouts?" the answer would be, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Kansas, Illinois, Decota, or some other part of the United States, the party being frequently under the impression that these places were still belonging to the British.

Now, by the last Emigration Report for the last five years, there have arrived in Canada upwards of five hundred thousand emigrants, and out of this large number only one hundred and fifty thousand are settled in Canada; all the rest have gone over our fine railways to the United States; and I have no doubt that a very large proportion of these fully believed they were going to settle in Western Canada under the British flag—such is the lamentable ignorance which prevails among that class of emigrants!

All my lectures were intended to disabuse their minds of any such ideas; and to inform them that Britain lost the "American Colony" when they rebelled against British rule and asserted their independence in 1776, and that they are still independent of British laws and of British institutions. I also explained to them that Canada alone was British, and would ever be a part of the British Empire; and by the use of maps showed them plainly the position of the United States, so as to prevent any confusion in their minds about what was British and what was foreign.

These points having been explained, I pointed out to them that no British subject (who would of course be a "foreigner" in the United States) could hold a deed of freehold land in the States without first forswearing his allegiance to his native land and Queen Victoria. I met several persons on their return home on account of the money crisis in the States, who said they were obliged to take this oath or lose their property.

Also "foreigners" settling in Britain or Canada must all become British subjects and take an oath of allegiance to our Queen before they can enjoy the full privileges of British subjects.

In conclusion I strongly recommend that the Governments of Canada will without further delay select the most influential men to meet the British Parliament, and to unite the two governments in this great cause of Emigration to this the western part of the British Empire, say to the number of four millions of men which will release her of her surplus population; and will add greatly to our strength and loyalty and prosperity, as we are only four millions of inhabitants in one of the largest and most prosperous countries in the world, capable of settling fifty millions inhabitants of prosperous and happy farmers, machinests, and mercantile business men, and make us what we must be, the right arm of the British Empire.

(Signed,) MAJOR C. DONALDSON.

Director and Commissioner of Emigration Aid Society of the District of Niagara and St. Catharines, in connection with Hamilton and the Government of Ontario.

The following are the resolutions:—

Moved by Alexander Muir, and seconded by P. Larkin,

That the report just read of Mr. C. Donaldson's mission on Emigration as our commissioner to Europe, including cash expenses, be received and adopted, and printed, and an assessment levied of a third call of twenty-five per cent. upon the capital stock of the Society to pay the same.—Carried.

G. A. CLARK, President.

Moved by Alexander Muir, and seconded by P. Larkin,

That a vote of thanks to Mr. Donaldson for his energetic and persevering labours in so short a time in Europe in sending out so many fine, healthy farm labouring families, and arranging for a large tide of Emigration of farm labourers, tenant farmers, domestic servants and capitalists to come out to Canada next Spring.—Carried unanimously.

G. A. CLARK, President.